



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
68th Anniversary of the End of World War II
Battleship Missouri Memorial
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
02 September 2013
As prepared for delivery**

Thank you Michael for the opportunity to speak and for the support of USS Missouri Memorial Association for this event.

It is great to see so many here today and I thank the many distinguished guests who are here, including the Honorable Gordon England, Admiral Locklear, Admiral Fargo, fellow flag and general officers, the consuls general, state leaders, the Lay family and especially our World War II veterans and all those who have served, or continue to serve, in our armed forces. Good morning and Aloha!

It is an honor to be here to commemorate the 68th anniversary of the end of World War II, and of course to honor the legacy of Fleet Admiral Nimitz.

Here in Hawaii we are fortunate, considering the many historic memorials that remind us of the events of World War II. Behind me we see the Arizona Memorial. It stands as a reminder of the surprise aerial attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy on December 7th, 1941. The day after the attack the United States formally declared war on the Empire of Japan, a war that would rage throughout the Pacific for nearly four years.

I have often wondered what Admiral Nimitz thought when he first toured the harbor and looked upon the devastated fleet. I especially wonder what he thought when he looked at the Battleship *Arizona*. In 1938, as a new admiral, he had served on the *Arizona* as the commander of Battleship Division ONE. Of the 1,177 Sailors forever entombed in the *Arizona*, Admiral Nimitz would have known many of them as his former shipmates.

In the distance we see the Bowfin memorial, a reminder that early in his career, Admiral Nimitz spent considerable time developing the submarine community, commanding submarines and submarine divisions and constructing the submarine base right here at Pearl Harbor. It seems frugal budgets required innovative solutions back then, just as they do today. In the weeks and months after the attack, it was no surprise that he relied heavily on his Submarine Force to meet the enemy as the Pacific Fleet was being rebuilt.

Then here is the Battleship *Missouri*. Sixty-eight years ago today this mighty warship was anchored in Tokyo Bay. It was on her decks, about the same time of day, that the Instruments of Surrender were signed. Can you imagine the emotions of that historical event?

As the Commander of the Pacific Fleet, I am honored to serve in the wake of Fleet Admiral Nimitz. In this job I have had the opportunity to visit the memorials and sites of historic battles like Midway, Peleliu, Tarawa, Guadalcanal and Corregidor. Each time I was struck by how

remote and inhospitable these places were as I imagined the difficulties of fighting to take these beaches, with the crashing surf and shifting tides and the constant barrage of counter fire from the enemy. I've also been privileged to talk to veterans and hear their firsthand accounts of these battles and how they fought with honor, courage and commitment. Fleet Admiral Nimitz sent these courageous men to these remote and difficult places to fight and win so that our strategy could ultimately bring about victory. This legendary leader's legacy lives on today throughout the Pacific and the world.

After the war, Admiral Nimitz continued to serve as the Chief of Naval Operations. Despite the inevitable force reduction that follows every major conflict, he made sure that the Navy he led maintained a continuous presence in the Pacific in order to promote security and stability in the region. This may be his most enduring legacy.

Our presence in the West Pacific since the 1940s has helped most of these nations grow and their economies thrive. If you could see the before and after pictures of what many of these nations looked like after World War II, then in the 1970s, and now, it is truly remarkable how much they have developed. Nations like Singapore, Thailand, Korea and China continue to prosper as a result of the security and stability that we have helped provide since World War II.

Perhaps no nation in the Pacific has prospered more than the nation of Japan, one of our closest friends and one of our five treaty Allies in the region. Today, our Forward Deployed Naval Forces and other United States forces in Japan work closely with the very capable Japan Self Defense Forces. Japan has one of the world's largest economies and is one of our top economic trading partners.

Today we remain present in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region working with our allies, partners and friends to strengthen our relationships and maintain the conditions necessary for this continued growth. As we continue to rebalance in an era of fiscal austerity, I predict we will once again follow Admiral Nimitz's example and maintain our presence in the West Pacific for decades to come.

Fleet Admiral Nimitz also understood the importance of continued strategic, operational and tactical development; he valued the advantage technological advances and operational intelligence could give our military, just as we do today. He studied dutifully at the Naval War College where he gained an appreciation for strategy and tactics by studying historic battles, like the Battle of Jutland. Perhaps it was due to his unorthodox career path, but he often challenged current day naval operating approaches, even recognizing early on, the utility of the aircraft carrier and unrestricted submarine warfare.

From his studies and experience in manufacturing diesel engines, he understood the importance of our Nation's industrial base and the importance of maintaining critical shipyard repair capabilities, such as the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

He understood the importance of operational intelligence and what we call information dominance today, highlighted by decisions made surrounding the Battle of Midway. Even when we think of the nuclear submarines and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, isn't it interesting that

Fleet Admiral Nimitz was the lone voice of support for then-Captain Hyman Rickover's idea to build a nuclear-powered submarine? Important given the endurance nuclear power provides to our fleet today to cover the vast operational area of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Fleet Admiral Nimitz was a humble man, and I think he'd be the first to say that he had lots of help. Today, as you saw when they were recognized earlier, we have veterans of World War II sitting in the audience. Many of these men served under Fleet Admiral Nimitz and can tell you firsthand what it was like. These patriots fought, bled and sacrificed to end the war and create the conditions for a lasting and meaningful peace. We can't thank them enough for their service! I want to personally thank each of you who served our Nation during World War II for all that you have done. Thank you.

As I conclude I want to leave you with a quote by Admiral Nimitz, one that remains relevant. After the surrender ceremony on September 2nd, 1945, Fleet Admiral Nimitz spoke of those who died in the war in the Pacific. He said: "They fought together as brothers in arms; they died together and now they sleep side by side...To them, we have a solemn obligation, the obligation to ensure that their sacrifice will help make this a better and safer world in which to live." Fleet Admiral Nimitz believed that and he set the conditions to achieve it.

Today, our joint military forces are operating forward providing our President of the United States with the full range of military operations. Responsive, agile, ready to respond when required with Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen continuing to carry out the legacy of the courageous and dedicated World War II veterans. Those vets who have set us on a course to support peace and prosperity in this vast maritime domain. May we continue to reflect on and not forget what it took to get to September 2nd, 1945.

May God Bless our Nation, our Navy and all of those who selflessly served our Nation in uniform and their families.

Aloha and Mahalo Nui Loa